



# **The Federation of Spixworth Schools**

## **Social Media Policy**

Agreed by Governing Body: Autumn 2023

To be reviewed: Autumn 2025

Group Responsible: SLT

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## **Statement of intent**

The Federation of Spixworth Schools understands that social media is a growing part of life outside of school. We have a responsibility to safeguard our pupils against potential dangers when accessing the internet at school, and to educate our pupils about how to protect themselves online when outside of school.

We are committed to:

- Encouraging the responsible use of social media by all staff, parents and pupils in support of the federation's mission, values and objectives.
- Protecting our pupils from the dangers of social media.
- Preventing and avoiding damage to the reputation of the federation through irresponsible use of social media.
- Protecting our staff from cyberbullying and potentially career damaging behaviour.
- Arranging online safety meetings for parents.

## 1. Legal framework

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- DfE (2023) 'Data protection in schools'
- The UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR)
- Data Protection Act 2018
- Computer Misuse Act 1990, amended by the Police and Justice Act 2006
- Freedom of Information Act 2000
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- Equality Act 2010
- DfE (2023) 'Keeping children safe in education 2023'

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Device and Technology Acceptable Use Agreement for Staff
- Device and Technology Acceptable Use Agreement for Pupils
- Online Safety Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Pupil Code of Conduct
- Complaints Procedures Policy
- Anti-bullying Policy
- Allegations of Abuse Against Staff Policy
- Low-level Safeguarding Concerns Policy
- Photography and Images Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Confidentiality Policy
- Cyber-security Policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Disciplinary Policy and Procedure
- Behaviour Policy
- School Social Media Accounts – Terms of Use Agreement

## 2. Roles and responsibilities

The governing board will be responsible for:

- Ensuring this policy is implemented by the school.
- Reviewing this policy on an annual basis.
- Ensuring the DSL's remit covers online safety.
- Ensuring their own knowledge of social media and online safety issues is up-to-date.
- Ensuring all staff undergo safeguarding and child protection training, including online safety, at induction.
- Ensuring that this policy, as written, does not discriminate on any grounds, including against any of the protected characteristics, as outlined in the Equality Act 2010.

The executive headteacher will be responsible for:

- The overall implementation of this policy and ensuring that all staff, parents and pupils are aware of their responsibilities in relation to social media use.
- Promoting safer working practices and standards with regards to the use of social media.
- Establishing clear expectations of behaviour for social media use.
- In conjunction with the governing board, handling complaints regarding this policy and its provisions in line with the federation's Complaints Procedures Policy.
- Implementing appropriate sanctions and disciplinary methods where there is a breach of this policy.
- Taking steps to minimise the amount of misplaced or malicious allegations in relation to social media use.
- Working alongside the DPO and ICT technicians to ensure appropriate security measures are implemented and compliance with UK GDPR and other data protection legislation.

The DSL will be responsible for:

- The school's approach to online safety.
- Dealing with concerns about social media use that are safeguarding concerns.

Staff members will be responsible for:

- Adhering to the principles outlined in this policy and the Device and Technology Acceptable Use Agreement for Staff.
- Ensuring pupils adhere to the principles outlined in this policy and that it is implemented fairly and consistently in the classroom.
- Reporting any social media misuse by staff, pupils or parents to the executive headteacher immediately.
- Attending any training on social media use offered by the federation.

Parents will be responsible for:

- Adhering to the principles outlined in this policy.
- Taking appropriate responsibility for their use of social media and the influence on their children at home.
- Promoting safe social media behaviour for both themselves and their children.
- Attending meetings held by the federation regarding social media use wherever possible.

Pupils will be responsible for:

- Adhering to the principles outlined in this policy and the Pupil Code of Conduct.
- Ensuring they understand how to use social media appropriately and stay safe online.
- Seeking help from school staff if they are concerned about something they or a peer have experienced on social media.
- Reporting incidents and concerns relating to social media in line with the procedures within this policy.
- Demonstrating the same high standards of behaviour as expected within the federation.

The school support manager will be responsible for:

- Monitoring and reviewing all federation-run social media accounts.
- Vetting and approving individuals who wish to be 'friends' or 'followers' on the federation's social media platforms.
- Consulting with staff on the purpose of the social media account and the content published.
- Maintaining a log of inappropriate comments or abuse relating to the federation.
- Handling inappropriate comments or abuse posted on the federation's social media accounts, or regarding the federation.
- Creating a terms of use agreement, which all content published must be in accordance with.
- Ensuring that enough resources are provided to keep the content of the social media accounts up-to-date and relevant.

ICT technicians will be responsible for:

- Providing technical support in the development and implementation of the federation's social media accounts.
- Implementing appropriate security measures as directed by the executive headteacher.
- Ensuring that the federation's filtering and monitoring systems are updated as appropriate.

### **3. Federation social media accounts**

Social media accounts for the federation will only be created by the school support manager and other designated staff members, following approval from the executive headteacher. A federation-based social media account will be entirely separate from any personal social media accounts held by staff members and will be linked to an official school email account.

When setting up a federation social media account, consideration will be given to the following:

- The purpose of the account
- Whether the overall investment will achieve the aim of the account
- The level of interactive engagement with the site
- Whether pupils, staff, parents or members of the public will be able to contribute content to the account
- How much time and effort staff members are willing to commit to the account
- How the success of the account will be evaluated

The executive headteacher will be responsible for authorising members of staff and any other individual to have admin access to federation social media accounts. Only people authorised by the executive headteacher will be allowed to post on the federation's accounts.

Passwords for the federation's social media accounts are stored securely on the school's ICT network. The passwords are only shared with people authorised by the executive headteacher.

All posts made to federation social media accounts will not breach copyright, data protection or freedom of information legislation.

The federation's social media accounts will comply with the platform's rules. The school support manager will ensure anyone with authorisation to post on the federation's social media accounts are provided with training on the platform and the rules around what can be posted.

Federation social media accounts will be moderated by the school support manager or another designated member of staff.

### **Staff conduct**

Only staff with authorisation from the executive headteacher will post on school accounts and they will adhere to the Federation Social Media Accounts – Terms of Use Agreement.

Staff will get content approved by the head of school before it is posted. Staff will only post content that meets the federation's social media objectives, including the following:

- Reminders about upcoming events
- Good news regarding a school's performance, attainment or reputation
- Good news regarding the achievements of staff and pupils
- Information that parents should be aware of, e.g. school closure

Staff will ensure that their posts meet the following criteria:

- The post does not risk bringing a school into disrepute
- The post only expresses neutral opinions and does not include any personal views
- The post uses appropriate and school-friendly language
- The post is sensitive towards those who will read it, and uses particularly neutral and sensitive language when discussing something that may be controversial to some
- The post does not contain any wording or content that could be construed as offensive
- The post does not take a side in any political debate or express political opinions
- The post does not contain any illegal or unlawful content

## **4. Staff use of personal social media**

Staff will not be prohibited from having personal social media accounts; however, it is important that staff protect their professional reputation by ensuring they use personal social media accounts in an appropriate manner.

Staff will be required to adhere to the following guidelines when using personal social media accounts:

- Staff members will not access personal social media platforms during school hours.
- Staff members will not use any federation-owned mobile devices to access personal accounts.
- Staff will not 'friend', 'follow' or otherwise contact pupils through their personal social media accounts. If pupils attempt to 'friend' or 'follow' a staff member, they will report this to the head of school.

- Staff will be strongly advised to not 'friend' or 'follow' parents on their personal accounts.
- Staff members will ensure the necessary privacy controls are applied to personal accounts and will avoid identifying themselves as an employee of the federation on their personal social media accounts.
- Staff will ensure it is clear that views posted on personal accounts are personal and are not those of the federation.
- Staff will not post any content online that is damaging to the federation, its staff or pupils.
- Staff members will not post any information which could identify a pupil, class or the schools – this includes any images, videos and personal information.
- Staff members will not post anonymously or under an alias to evade the guidance given in this policy.
- Staff will not post comments about the federation, pupils, parents, staff or other members of the school community.

Breaches of this policy by members of staff will be taken seriously, and in the event of illegal, defamatory or discriminatory content, could lead to prosecution, disciplinary action or dismissal. Members of staff will be aware that if their out-of-work activity brings the federation into disrepute, disciplinary action will be taken.

Attempts to bully, coerce or manipulate members of the federation community via social media by members of staff will be dealt with as a disciplinary matter.

## **5. Parent social media use**

Parents are not able to comment on or respond to information shared via federation social media sites.

Parents will be asked not to share any photos or personal details of pupils when commenting on social media sites, nor post comments concerning other pupils or staff members.

Any parents that are seen to be breaching the guidance in this policy will be required to attend a meeting with the head of school.

Breaches of this policy will be taken seriously, and in the event of illegal, defamatory or discriminatory content could lead to prosecution.

## **6. Pupil social media use**

Pupils will not access social media during lesson time, unless it is part of a curriculum activity. Pupils will not be permitted to use the school's WiFi network to access any social media platforms unless prior permission has been sought from the head of school, and an ICT technician has ensured appropriate network security measures are applied.

Pupils will not attempt to 'friend', 'follow' or otherwise contact members of staff through their personal social media accounts. Where a pupil attempts to 'friend' or 'follow' a staff member on their personal account, it will be reported to the head of school.



Pupils will not post any content online which is damaging to the federation or any of its staff or pupils. Pupils will not post anonymously or under an alias to evade the guidance given in this policy.

Pupils are instructed not to sign up to any social media platforms that have an age restriction above the pupil's age.

If inappropriate content is accessed online on school premises, this will be reported to a member of staff.

Breaches of this policy will be taken seriously, and managed in line with the Behaviour Policy.

## **7. Data protection principles**

The school will obtain consent from pupils and parents at the beginning of each academic year using the Images and Videos Parental Consent Form, which will confirm whether or not consent is given for posting images and videos of a pupil on social media platforms. The consent will be valid for the entire academic year. Consent provided for the use of images and videos only applies to federation accounts – staff, pupils and parents are not permitted to post any imagery or videos on personal accounts.

Consent is obtained from whoever holds parental responsibility for the pupil.

A record of consent is maintained throughout the academic year, which details the pupils for whom consent has been provided. The DPO will be responsible for ensuring this consent record remains up-to-date.

Parents and pupils are able to withdraw or amend their consent at any time. To do so, parents and pupils must inform the school in writing. Where parents or pupils withdraw or amend their consent, it will not affect the processing of any images or videos prior to when consent was withdrawn or amended. Processing will cease in line with parents' and pupils' requirements following this. Wherever it is reasonably practicable to do so, the federation will take measures to remove any posts before consent was withdrawn or amended, such as removing an image from a social media site.

Consent can be provided for certain principles only, for example only images of a pupil are permitted to be posted, and not videos. This will be made explicitly clear on the consent form provided. The federation will only post images and videos of pupils for whom consent has been received.

Only federation-owned devices will be used to take images and videos of the federation community, which have been pre-approved by the online safety officer for use. Only appropriate images and videos of pupils will be posted in which they are suitably dressed, e.g. it would not be suitable to display an image of a pupil in swimwear.

When posting on social media, the federation will use group or class images or videos with general labels, e.g. 'sports day'.

When posting images and videos of pupils, the federation will apply data minimisation techniques, such as pseudonymisation (blurring a photograph), to reduce the risk of a pupil being identified. The federation will not post pupils' personal details on social media platforms

and pupils' full names will never be used alongside any videos or images in which they are present.

Before posting on social media, staff will:

- Refer to the consent record log to ensure consent has been received for that pupil and for the exact processing activities required.
- Ensure that there is no additional identifying information relating to a pupil.

Any breaches of the data protection principles will be handled in accordance with the federation's Cyber-security Policy.

## **8. Safeguarding**

Any disclosures made by pupils to staff about online abuse, harassment or exploitation, whether they are the victim or disclosing on behalf of another child, will be handled in line with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

Concerns regarding a staff member's online behaviour will be reported to the executive headteacher, who will decide on the best course of action in line with the relevant policies, e.g. the Staff Code of Conduct, Allegations of Abuse Against Staff Policy, and Disciplinary Policy and Procedures. If the concern is about the executive headteacher, it will be reported to the chair of governors.

Concerns regarding a pupil's online behaviour will be reported to the DSL, who will investigate any concerns with relevant staff members, e.g. the executive headteacher and ICT technicians, and manage concerns in accordance with relevant policies depending on their nature, e.g. the Behaviour Policy and Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

Where there is a concern that illegal activity has taken place, the executive headteacher will contact the police. The federation will avoid unnecessarily criminalising pupils, e.g. calling the police, where criminal behaviour is thought to be inadvertent and as a result of ignorance or normal developmental curiosity, e.g. a pupil has taken and distributed indecent imagery of themselves. The DSL will decide in which cases this response is appropriate and will manage such cases in line with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

As part of the usual communication with parents, the federation will reinforce the importance of pupils being safe online and inform parents what systems the federation uses to filter and monitor online use. The federation will also make it clear to parents what their children are being asked to do online for school, including what platforms they will be asked to access and who from the federation, if anyone, they will be interacting with online.

## **9. Blocked content**

In accordance with the federation's Cyber-security Policy, the online safety officer will install firewalls on the school's networks to prevent access to certain websites.

ICT technicians and safeguarding officers retain the right to monitor staff and pupil access to websites when using the school's networks and on federation-owned devices.

Attempts made to circumvent the network's firewalls will result in a ban from using federation computing equipment, other than with close supervision.

Inappropriate content accessed on the federation's computers will be reported to an ICT technician so that the site can be blocked. Requests may be made to access erroneously blocked content by submitting a blocked content access form to an ICT technician, which will be approved by the executive headteacher.

## **10. Cyberbullying**

Any reports of cyberbullying on social media platforms by pupils will be handled in accordance with the Anti-bullying Policy.

Cyberbullying against pupils or staff is not tolerated under any circumstances. Incidents of cyberbullying are dealt with quickly and effectively wherever they occur in line with the Anti-bullying Policy. Allegations of cyberbullying from staff members will be handled in accordance with the Allegations of Abuse Against Staff Policy.

## **11. Training**

The federation recognises that early intervention can protect pupils who may be at risk of cyberbullying or negative social media behaviour. As such, staff will receive training in identifying potentially at-risk pupils. Staff will receive training on social media as part of their new starter induction. Staff will receive ongoing training as part of their development.

Pupils will be educated about online safety and appropriate social media use on a termly basis through a variety of mediums, including assemblies, PSHE lessons and cross-curricular links. Pupils will be provided with material to reinforce their knowledge.

Parents will be invited to online safety and social media training on a regular basis and provided with relevant resources.

Training for all pupils, staff and parents will be refreshed in light of any significant incidents or changes.

## **12. Monitoring and review**

This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis by the executive headteacher and governing board.

The next scheduled review date for this policy is Autumn 2024.

Any changes made to this policy will be communicated to all staff, pupils and parents.

## Blocked content access request form

<b>Requester</b>	
<b>Staff name</b>	
<b>Date</b>	
<b>Full URL</b>	
<b>Site content</b>	
<b>Reasons for access</b>	
<b>Identified risks and control measures</b>	
<b>Authoriser</b>	
<b>Approved?</b>	
<b>Reasons</b>	
<b>Staff name</b>	
<b>Date</b>	
<b>Signature</b>	

## Inappropriate content report form

<b>Staff name (submitting report)</b>	
<b>Name of individual accessing inappropriate content (if known)</b>	
<b>Date</b>	
<b>Full URL(s)</b>	
<b>Nature of inappropriate content</b>	
<b>To be completed by ICT technician</b>	
<b>Action taken</b>	
<b>Staff name</b>	
<b>Date</b>	
<b>Signature</b>	